

# The Letter

(Jeremiah 29:1-14 NLT)

Yearly Theme: *“Kindness is... Action”*

Series Title: *“Kindness through Discipline”*

June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023

---

## Something to think about:

Do you ever get discouraged, and feel like your circumstances are never going to change, and that you'll be stuck forever with the same results that you've always gotten that aren't what you ever dreamed or desired? Have you ever wanted to just give up because it seems like you're way too far off the path to have any meaningful results for hope and a future?

As we conclude our series today on Jeremiah, we read a letter that he wrote on behalf of GOD to the elders, priests, prophets, and all the people who had been exiled to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. This letter was a letter of hope. It was a letter that reminded the people that GOD had not forgotten them and that His punishment would not last forever.

In this letter, GOD tells the exiles to settle into the cities and towns to which they had been exiled in this foreign land. He tells them to build homes, have children, and pray for the prosperity of the towns in which they live. He tells them to beware of false prophets who are only telling them what they want to hear, rather than the truth. And He encourages them to wait expectantly and patiently while in exile because their exile would not last forever. Let's take a look at GOD's word to the exiles...

## *Jeremiah 29:1-14 (NLT),*

*Jeremiah wrote a letter from Jerusalem to the elders, priests, prophets, and all the people who had been exiled to Babylon by King Nebuchadnezzar. <sup>2</sup> This was after King Jehoiachin, the queen mother, the court officials, the other officials of Judah, and all the craftsmen and artisans had been deported from Jerusalem. <sup>3</sup> He sent the letter with Elasah son of Shaphan and Gemariah son of Hilkiah when they went to Babylon as King Zedekiah's ambassadors to Nebuchadnezzar. This is what Jeremiah's letter said:*

*<sup>4</sup> This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: <sup>5</sup> "Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. <sup>6</sup> Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! <sup>7</sup> And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare."*

*<sup>8</sup> This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let your prophets and fortune-tellers who are with you in the land of Babylon trick you. Do not listen to their dreams, <sup>9</sup> because they are telling you lies in my name. I have not sent them," says the LORD.*

*<sup>10</sup> This is what the LORD says: "You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. <sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> In those days when you pray, I will listen. <sup>13</sup> If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you," says the LORD. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land."*

Key Point: *“Even amidst judgment, GOD remains with and sustains His people.”*

It's great to know that GOD is still active and working when things are not what they should be, but what are we to do in the meantime while we wait on GOD's promises to be fulfilled?

- \_\_\_\_\_ in.

Bloom where you're planted!

*Jeremiah 29:4-7 (NLT), <sup>4</sup> This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says to all the captives he has exiled to Babylon from Jerusalem: <sup>5</sup> "Build homes, and plan to stay. Plant gardens, and eat the food they produce. <sup>6</sup> Marry and have children. Then find spouses for them so that you may have many grandchildren. Multiply! Do not dwindle away! <sup>7</sup> And work for the peace and prosperity of the city where I sent you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, for its welfare will determine your welfare."*

- \_\_\_\_\_.

Beware of those who tell you only what you want to hear.

*Jeremiah 29:8-9 (NLT), <sup>8</sup> This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "Do not let your prophets and fortune-tellers who are with you in the land of Babylon trick you. Do not listen to their dreams, <sup>9</sup> because they are telling you lies in my name. I have not sent them," says the LORD.*

- **Wait** \_\_\_\_\_.

Trust in GOD to fulfill His promises, even if it doesn't happen in your lifetime.

*Jeremiah 29:10-14 (NLT), <sup>10</sup> This is what the LORD says: "You will be in Babylon for seventy years. But then I will come and do for you all the good things I have promised, and I will bring you home again. <sup>11</sup> For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. <sup>12</sup> In those days when you pray, I will listen. <sup>13</sup> If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. <sup>14</sup> I will be found by you," says the LORD. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land."*

### **Something to take home:**

*Hebrews 12:1-6 (NLT), <sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. <sup>2</sup> We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne. <sup>3</sup> Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. <sup>4</sup> After all, you have not yet given your lives in your struggle against sin.*

*<sup>5</sup> And have you forgotten the encouraging words God spoke to you as his children? He said,*

*"My child, don't make light of the LORD's discipline,  
and don't give up when he corrects you.*

*<sup>6</sup> For the LORD disciplines those he loves,  
and he punishes each one he accepts as his child."*

How do we win when everything seems to be going wrong; when we seem to be stumbling and struggling all along the way? We must learn to settle in; stay active and strong, and be consistent in our walk with Christ. We must beware of false prophets who merely tell us what we want to hear rather than telling us the truth. And we must learn to wait expectantly on the LORD who always fulfills his promises. It's only when we get our eyes off Jesus that we lose the race.

**Key Point:** *"Even amidst judgment, GOD remains with and sustains His people."*